

I am writing to you today as a current satellite TV subscriber and DirectTV customer who would like to add my voice of dissent to the pending merger of EchoStar and DirectTV.

By merging, the combined company will be a monopoly, stifling choice and product development.

Like the vast majority of DirectTV customers, we own our receiving equipment consisting of the small dish and related electronics, and a set top receiver. The customers of DirectTV have a choice of many manufactures and products, including advanced products such as UltimateTV and the DirectTiVo. EchoStar has no comparable product in terms of features. What EchoStar has described as comparable is a rudimentary unit that is the equivalent of a digital, tapeless VCR, while the UltimateTV and the TiVo possess an advanced system to manage a customers recordings, including reacting to schedule changes for our favorite shows. In fact, one of the "comparable" units EchoStar has publicly advertised to compete with the TiVo / UltimateTV is their DishPlayer. The DishPlayer was, and currently is, a failure that EchoStar refuses to remedy. Should EchoStar be successful, they consumers will be offered no choice, and EchoStar will have no competition for consumers to turn to. If EchoStar refuses to fix the DishPlayer now, with DirectTV as a competitor, what will persuade them when they have control of the entire US DBS market? Additionally, the base level of satellite receivers offered by EchoStar are inferior when compared to DirectTV units manufactured by Hughes, Sony, or RCA.

We made decisions based upon our desires when purchasing equipment. With the merged company, we will either be forced to take what they offer in an equipment swap-out, or purchase new equipment that would replace what we had before. If this were to happen, I would drop satellite and either return to cable, or erect an antenna. With this merger, we are moving back, not moving forward.

The lure of satellite broadband